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Rep. Jerome Delvin
P.O. Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

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A Report from the
2003 Legislative Session

Representative
Jerome DELVIN

PO Box 40600
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Representative
Jerome DELVIN
8th Legislative District



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2003 Legislative Session

March 2003

House Committee Assignments:

- Juvenile Justice & Family Law-
ranking Republican
- Technology, Telecommunications & Energy

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Dear friends,

As the 2003 legislative session began in January, most of the focus was on state government's budget troubles, caused by years of overspending. I'm concerned about the budget, because it can't be fixed painlessly. But a couple other things worry me more.

The first is jobs. The booming economy we're enjoying in the Tri-Cities simply isn't found anywhere else in the state. I want to help return Washington to the place it was just within the last decade — when jobs were abundant, thousands of people were moving from welfare to work, and we were well-positioned to care for the more vulnerable among us.

The second is the loss of public trust in government. People count on me, in my job as a police officer, to protect and serve them. But what they've seen coming out of Olympia has shaken their faith in state government. That relationship must be repaired if we are to successfully address important issues facing our communities, like transportation, education and health care.

You can help me by taking a few minutes to read my report on the issues that concern Mid-Columbia residents and share your comments with me. Call me using the toll-free legislative hotline, send me an e-mail, write me a letter or stop in for a visit if you are in the Olympia area. Come talk to me March 22 at my town hall meeting. It is a great privilege to serve again as your state representative the next two years. If you need help from my office, don't hesitate to let me know.

Sincerely,

Jerome Delvin

Join us for a
town hall meeting
March 22

Mark your calendars to meet with
your 8th District legislative
delegation — Sen. Pat Hale, Rep.
Shirley Hankins and me — at public
meetings Saturday, March 22:

■ Richland: 9 - 10:30 a.m.
City Council Chambers

■ Kennewick: 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
City Council Chambers

Hope to see you there!

Rebuild trust through responsible budgeting

Two years ago I and other Republicans in the Legislature pushed for a responsible budget that took into account the fact that our state's economy was sputtering. We did the same in 2002. But the Democrats in charge chose to overspend and put off the hard decisions. Over the past two years they spent about \$1.4 billion more than the state collected in revenues.

This session we are required to adopt a new budget that funds day-to-day state services for 2003-05. Unfortunately, simply continuing the services the state now provides would cost more than \$2 billion beyond the resources expected to be available. That's the "shortfall" you may have heard about.

To his credit, Governor Locke has publicly stated his opposition to a general tax increase. Raising taxes to maintain today's level of services is no way to encourage employers and help struggling families. The responsible solution is to live within our means, just as families have to do.

Reducing services to a level we can afford will require significant cuts that affect people who depend on government services. But unfortunately — and honestly — the overspending and declining economy we've seen the past two years make it impossible to avoid some pain this year.



Bring jobs and prosperity back to Washington

I'm concerned about the state budget, but it isn't the real crisis in Washington. What worries me more is our unemployment, and the poor economic conditions elsewhere in our state. Since 1999, Washington has lost 160,000 jobs — almost the population of Vancouver. And for two years our state's unemployment rate has hovered near the worst in the country.

I and other House Republicans want to get Washington back to where it was by creating 160,000 new private-sector jobs in the next three years. To do that, we need regulatory changes like those suggested by the Washington Competitiveness Council, to attract new employers and encourage expansion. I also believe government needs to change its attitude, and remember that its financial health depends directly on the private sector. The smart thing to do would be to act as a partner, not an adversary, with employers who grow our economy and provide jobs and income for our citizens.

Five for five: A transportation plan that makes 'cents'

To get the state's economy going again, we must get Washington moving again. People in the 8th District understand the value of good roads, and many of us travel to the Puget Sound area often enough to be familiar with the traffic congestion there.

I saw the failure of Referendum 51 in Benton County as a vote of no confidence in state government's ability to invest the taxpayers' money wisely — not as a vote against good roads and reducing traffic congestion in other parts of the state.

R-51's biggest flaw was the emphasis on collecting taxes ahead of reform. So last month House Republicans put a new kind of transportation reform, construction and funding package on the table. It represents a 180-degree turn, instituting reforms and accountability before asking for money.



Our Five-for-Five proposal features a set of five significant transportation reforms. By themselves these reforms would make the money collected through the existing 23-cent-per-gallon state gas tax go much farther. But we included another incentive. For each reform signed into law, there's an additional reward: one cent more gas tax. The limit is five reforms for five cents. But if only two reforms become law, the gas tax goes up only two cents. No reforms? No tax increase.

The House already has passed **House Bill 1122**, which would do away with the state Transportation Commission — an idea we proposed along with Five-for-Five. Our plan won't produce all the resources needed to fix the transportation infrastructure. But it's a start, and stepping forward with it this early in the session gives me plenty of time to find out what you think.



Representative
Jerome DELVIN
8th Legislative District

A note about education funding

Many people are rightfully concerned about how Gov. Locke's proposed budget would suspend funding of Initiative 728 and Initiative 732. But there are some things to keep in perspective. I-728, for instance, was promoted as a way to increase education funding without raising taxes or cutting other programs. Perhaps it received 72 percent of the vote because people got the impression that I-728 was "free," to be paid for by surplus revenue collected above the state's spending limit (Initiative 601) — money that couldn't otherwise be spent. That revenue doesn't exist now. The surplus is gone.

The way it looks this year, funding the two education initiatives will mean taking away money from families struggling through a tough economy, via higher taxes, or taking away funding from other worthy programs. Convincing a majority of legislators and the governor to do that won't be easy.



The governor wants to suspend I-728 and I-732 the same way that a majority of legislators decided last year to suspend I-601, and for the same reason — to get through a tough time.

I and other Republicans want fair pay for our teachers. We want classroom sizes that make sense, and we're concerned about keeping good teachers in our classrooms. So our message to teachers and education supporters is this: help us put the brakes on costs that are continually rising, like health care, and help us revive Washington's economy. Then we'll be in a position to invest more in education without harming other state programs valued by our citizens.

Make violent video games harder to get

It's against the law to sell or give tobacco to a child younger than 18. As ranking Republican in the House Juvenile Justice & Family Law Committee, I am co-sponsoring a bill to establish a similar standard for violent video and computer games.

House Bill 1009 would make it a misdemeanor to sell or rent, to children under 18, games that allow players to kill, injure or commit violence against a character de-

picted as a public law enforcement officer. The same goes for video or computer games that are rated "mature" or "for adults only" by the game's manufacturer or the video-game industry.

The bill is intended to make it harder for kids to get their hands on games such as "Grand Theft Auto: Vice City" (which lets players kill police officers, steal cars, vandalize stores, deal drugs and so on). It has Republican and Democrat support.

Let's stay in touch!

The 8th Legislative District is home to about 120,000 people. Letters like this help me reach your household and others with information about issues that probably affect your daily life in some way. You can expect to see a few more of these over the next two years, to help us stay connected. But I really prefer to correspond more directly with the people I represent. Send me your e-mail address so I can regularly inform you about things happening at the Capitol. Use e-mail to ask me a question, call me on the toll-free hotline **(1-800-562-6000)**, or put a letter in the mail to me. I'm always happy to hear from you.

